



PRAYER IN AMERICA Fact Sheet

(www.prayerinamerica.org)

Public Television Broadcast: November 2007

PRAYER IN AMERICA asks the question: What role has prayer played in shaping the development and history of America? The two-part documentary explores contemporary debates about the role of prayer through the lens of history. By asking rhetorically, “How did we get here?” the show examines the ways in which prayer has contributed to and continues to shape the American experience.

The film is inspired by author James P. Moore, Jr.’s book, *One Nation Under God: The History of Prayer in America* (Doubleday, 2005). In his highly original approach to the history of the United States, Jim Moore suggests that prayer has historically, and through to the present day, been a significant influence on the political, cultural and economic development of the United States. Producers Alison Rostankowski and Chip Duncan explore this thesis through interviews with a wide-ranging group of scholars, writers, and experts on the history of religion and prayer in America. The documentary reflects diverse, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives that inspire viewers to examine the role religion and prayer play in their personal lives, politics, and culture.

Main Topics for Show One – American Prayer – Immigrant Experience and Prayer/Slavery and Prayer – The Social Gospel and The Prosperity Gospel and Prayer – School Prayer

Main Topics for Show Two – Forgiveness and Prayer – Science and Prayer – War and Peace – Healing and Prayer – Civil Religion and Prayer

National Media Outreach Campaign

The national outreach campaign uses the two-hour **PRAYER IN AMERICA** documentary as a catalyst to bring people – no matter what faith they espouse – together in interfaith dialogue. It helps to stimulate discussion about the role of prayer from contemporary perspectives. The emphasis is on interreligious dialogue – respectful of the unique contributions different religious groups have made to the shaping of the religious history of the U.S.

The campaign is partnering with local public television stations to offer facilitated dialogues related to the issues in **PRAYER IN AMERICA**. Other stations will conduct screenings/ discussions and produce local media resources to support interreligious dialogue in their communities.

Funders

PRAYER IN AMERICA is produced by The Duncan Group. Iowa Public Television is the presenting station. Funding for the **PRAYER IN AMERICA** documentary and outreach campaign is provided by the John Templeton Foundation. The outreach campaign is developed and managed by Outreach Extensions.

Campaign Objectives

- The campaign partnered with selected local public television stations to offer facilitated dialogues/workshops related to the issues in **PRAYER IN AMERICA**. Other stations conducted screenings/discussions and produced local media resources to support interreligious dialogue in their communities.
- The campaign encourages creative collaborations among seminaries, departments of religion, interfaith organizations and coalitions, and faith- and community-based organizations. These groups can work together to host interfaith dialogues, study circles, and screening/discussion events using the community screening version of PRAYER IN AMERICA.
- Local organizations can forge community connections through linking campaign activities to special community activities such as the World Day of Prayer, National Day of Interfaith Youth Service, or citywide cultural celebration that includes interfaith dialogue.

Campaign participants:

- Can include faith leaders who function within diverse arenas including schools, seminaries, departments of religion, interfaith organizations and coalitions, and faith- and community-based organizations.
- Specific audiences include clergy; lay leaders; seminarians; professors in sociology, religion, and philosophy disciplines; graduate/undergraduate students in religion classes at secular universities; and leaders of interfaith, multicultural, and immigration-related organizations.
- The campaign builds public will along with community engagement, reaching various faith traditions and houses of worship.

Outreach campaign media resources include:

- **Community Resource Guide:** Developed by Outreach Extensions with contributed essays, the guide supports interfaith dialogue about PRAYER IN AMERICA and its themes. It includes suggestions for screenings/discussions, group convenings, and solution-based community action; descriptions of faith traditions practiced in the United States; a glossary of terms; and additional resources.
- **PRAYER IN AMERICA DVD:** The Duncan Group and Iowa Public Television will produce a DVD for PRAYER IN AMERICA that will include the documentary and expanded interviews.
- **PRAYER IN AMERICA Community Screening Version:** Outreach campaign participants will be able to use a complimentary community screening version of the documentary as a conversation starter for interfaith dialogue linked to the themes presented.
- **Electronic Newsletter:** A national outreach campaign e-newsletter is available beginning in June 2007. Interested readers are encouraged to sign up for the e-newsletter on the campaign's Web site.
- **Campaign Web Site (www.prayerinamerica.org):** The Web site supports community sustainability. It includes extensive resource materials that provide a

context for interfaith dialogue; features personal testimony regarding prayer; and reports on local outreach activities.



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